

Oklahoma

Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

State Contact information

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Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?

A good place to start. Public adoption in Oklahoma is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), Child and Family Services Division (CFSD). DHS, DFSD and adoption links: www.okdhs.org, www.okdhs.org/dcfs/ and www.okdhs.org/adopt/adoptinfo.htm. Or phone: 877.OKSWIFT (877.657.9438).

1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? ("What is your state definition of special needs?")

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- Eight years of age or older
- Racial or ethnic factors (Indian, Hispanic, Asian, and African-American children three years of age or older)
- Member of a sibling group of any age placed together
- Physical disability requiring regular treatment with a specific diagnosis given by the child's physician
- Mental disability meeting the eligibility criteria for educable multi-handicapped (EMH) or trainable multi-handicapped (TMH) classes and evaluated by a licensed psychologist, psychometrist, school, or recognized diagnostic center. Note: A child with a demonstrable need for intensive adult supervision beyond ordinary age needs also qualifies
- Emotional disturbance established by a physician, a psychologist, behavioral therapist, or social worker; corroborated by a Child Welfare worker's observations of the child's behavior; corroborated by one or more caregivers such as foster parent, Head Start or school personnel, church nursery, or child care provider; and documented with a specific diagnosis and prognosis, if applicable
- At high risk of physical or mental disease (Indicators of high risk physical or mental disease are social and medical history such as mental illness of biological parents and family; events or life experiences such as severe sexual abuse; and prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol)

Note: The child who exhibits high risk of physical or mental disease for conditions that are not presently being treated may qualify. If no other special factors or conditions are met, no monthly payment is made until there are documented symptoms of physical or mental disease. See Question #4 for information regarding deferred adoption assistance.

2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above, under the age eighteen, and previously in the court ordered custody of Oklahoma DHS or a federally recognized Indian tribe as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act and the Oklahoma Indian Child Welfare Act.

3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.

\$1,200.00 per child

Note: This amount is available except in the event an Order Terminating Parental Rights or an Order Determining the Child Eligible for Adoption Without the Consent of a Biological Parent has been issued.

4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.

Oklahoma offers deferred adoption assistance. The application process is the same for deferred adoption assistance as for adoption assistance except that the family indicates on the application that they are requesting an “Agreement Only”- to receive no benefits now but to receive benefits in the future if needed. Adoptive parents are asked to identify possible future needs in the deferred adoption assistance agreement.

5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Oklahoma at adoption finalization or at adoption placement, depending on circumstances. If Oklahoma foster parents who receive foster care maintenance payments for a child adopt, agreements are set up to begin the day after finalization and foster care payments continue until finalization. In other situations, families may request payment at placement.

6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?

- a. When can a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement?

Adoption assistance agreements may be changed and the adoption assistance payment amount adjusted periodically when warranted by a change in the circumstances of the family or the needs of the child. Any changes to the adoption assistance agreement must be with the concurrence of the adoptive parent(s). An increase in monthly payments is sometimes requested when a child has specialized care needs (known as difficulty of care payments). Agreements are usually renegotiated if a child temporarily enters placement outside the family home. Adoptive parents are asked to send a written request and, if applicable, attach professional reports to support the requested change in payment or services in the adoption assistance agreement. DHS county offices locator link: www.okdhs.org/icounties/default.asp.

Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services

7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?

Post-adoption services in Oklahoma are administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), Children and Family Services Division through DHS and private and parent groups. Post adoption services include the following examples:

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| 1. Information and referral | 4. Support groups | 7. Residential treatment |
| 2. Educational/training programs | 5. Advocacy | 8. Home-based services |
| 3. Educational materials/library | 6. Respite | 9. Mediation/search/reunion services |

The Spaulding Curriculum on Adoption Support and Preservation was implemented throughout Oklahoma in January of 2000 and Casey Family Services hosts an adoption conference in November of each year. Weekend retreats are held four times a year in the metro areas of Oklahoma City and Tulsa to provide information and develop sustained support groups. Swift Adoptions has developed several training videos, including *Swift Adoptions: A Guide to Adoption Through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services*; *The Sibling Connection: Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Through Adoption*. For information contact Oklahoma Swift, phone: 877.OKSWIFT (877.657.9438) or the designated Swift adoption specialist in their county of residence or state Adoption Assistance Contact Margaret Devault, phone: 405.522.0331. DHS county offices locator link: www.okdhs.org/icounties/default.asp.

Several organizations offer a variety of post adoption support services. For respite options, see the Oklahoma Respite Programs link: www.respitelocator.org/o2states.htm. One Church, One Child of Oklahoma, Inc. is an adoptive parent support group located in Oklahoma City providing roundtable discussions, panels, lectures and audio-video presentations, phone: 405.424.0225 or e-mail: 1church1child@sbcglobal.net. Reunion services are available through the DHS Confidential Intermediary Search Program, link: www.okdhs.org/adopt/searchpgm.htm (Also known as the Adoption Reunion Registry).

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or post adoption services contact for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance

8. What mental health services are provided by your state?

Public mental health services for children in Oklahoma are administered by the Department of Human Services, Health Care Authority and include the following examples: mental health services (psychological/psychiatric services, emotional/psychological/behavioral counseling), outpatient and inpatient hospitalization, substance abuse services and prescription drugs. Oklahoma offers all medical services compensable through the state's fee for service Title XIX (Medicaid) program. Some services require prior authorization by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA). Oklahoma's Medicaid links: www.okdhs.org/medapp and www.okdhs.org/medapp/servicescovered.htm.

See also the Disabled Children's Program available to children receiving Supplemental Security Insurance disability payments for possible additional services: www.okdhs.org/medapp/ssidcp.htm.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered under your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

Oklahoma offers what is known as *Special Service Subsidies*. Funding is available for services not met by the family's private insurance or Medicaid. Adoptive parents must first seek and exhaust all resources, both public and private, before *Special Service Subsidies* are available.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings

10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.

Adoptive parents can request a fair hearing whenever a DHS/CFSD decision affects their child's adoption assistance benefits. Parents are first given an opportunity for an administrative review of the adverse decision. If parents choose to decline this review or the agency decision is unchanged following the review, they may complete and submit what is known as a Form H-4, Resource Family Request for a Fair Hearing. Parents are directed to contact their adoption assistance worker for Request for Fair Hearing form and information on seeking a fair hearing.

Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information

11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?

Oklahoma's general adoption links: www.okdhs.org/adopt, www.okdhs.org/adopt/#What and www.okdhs.org/adopt/#Question (Frequently Asked Questions)

12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?

Oklahoma's adoption assistance link: www.okdhs.org/adopt/adoptinfo.htm#facts (See Adoption Services, *Additional Facts*)

13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?

Oklahoma's state-specific medical assistance link: www.okdhs.org/medapp